EPISTLE

OF

CAUTION and ADVICE,

CONCERNING THE

BUYING and KEEPING

OF

SLAVES.

PHILADELPHIA:

Printed and Sold by JAMES CHATTEN,

in *Church-Alley.* 1754

AN

EPISTLE

OF

CAUTION and ADVICE,

CONCERNING THE

BUYING and KEEPING

OF

SLAVES.

PHILADELPHIA:

Printed and Sold by JAMES CHATTIN,

in Church-Alley. 1754.

An EPISTLE *of* CAUTION *and* ADVICE, *&c.*

From our Yearly Meeting *for the Provinces of* Pennſylvania, *and* New-Jerſeys, *held at* Burlington *by Adjournments from the* 14*th Day of the* Ninth Month, 1754, *to the* 19*th of the ſame incluſive.*

DEAR FRIENDS,

IT hath frequently been the Concern of our *Yearly Meeting*, to teſtify their Uneaſineſs and Diſunity, with the Importation and Purchaſing of *Negroes* and other *Slaves*, and to direct the Overſeers of the ſeveral *Meetings* to *adviſe* and *deal* with ſuch as engage therein. And it hath likewiſe been the continued Care of many weighty *Friends*,

to

to preſs thoſe that bear our Name, to guard, as much as poſſible, againſt, being in any Reſpect, concerned in promoting the Bondage of ſuch unhappy People: Yet, as we have with Sorrow to obſerve, that their Number is of late increaſed amongſt us; we have thought proper to make our Advice and Judgment more public, that none may plead Ignorance of our Principles therein; and alſo, again, earneſtly to exhort all to avoid, in any Manner encouraging that Practice of making *Slaves* of our Fellow Creatures.

Now dear *Friends*, if we continually bear in Mind the royal Law, *of doing to others, as we would be done by*, we ſhall never think of bereaving our Fellow Creatures of that valuable Bleſſing Liberty; nor endure to grow rich by their Bondage. To live in Eaſe and Plenty, by the Toil of thoſe whom Violence and Cruelty have put in our Power, is neither conſiſtent with Chriſtianity, nor common Juſtice; and we have good Reaſon to believe, draws down the Diſpleaſure of Heaven, it being a melancholy but true Reflection, That, where *Slave* keeping prevails,

prevails, pure Religion and Sobriety decline, as it evidently tends to harden the Heart, and render the Soul leſs ſuſceptible of that holy Spirit of Love, Meekneſs and Charity, which is the peculiar Character of a true Chriſtian.

How then can we who have been concerned to publiſh the Goſpel of univerſal Love and Peace among Mankind, be ſo inconſiſtent with ourſelves, as to purchaſe ſuch who are Priſoners of War; and thereby encourage, this antichriſtian Practice? And more eſpecially, as many of theſe poor Creatures are ſtolen away, Parents from Children, and Children from Parents, and others who were in good Circumſtances in their native Country, inhumanly torn from what they eſteemed a happy Situation, and compelled to toil in a State of Slavery, too often extreamly cruel! What dreadful Scenes of Murther and Cruelty thoſe barbarous Ravages muſt occaſion in theſe unhappy People's Country, are too obvious to mention: Let us make their Caſe our own, and conſider what we ſhould think, and how we ſhould feel, were we in their Circumſtances. Remember our bleſſed Redeemer's

poſitive

poſitive Command, *To do unto others, as we would have them do unto us*, and that, *with what Meaſure we mete, it ſhall be meaſured to us again.* And we intreat you to examine, whether the purchaſing of a *Negroe* either born here, or imported, doth not contribute to a further Importation; and conſequently to the upholding all the Evils above mentioned, and promoting Man-ſtealing, the only Theft which by the *Moſaic* Law was puniſhed with Death, *He that ſtealeth a Man and ſelleth him, or if he be found in his Hand, he ſhall ſurely be put to death*, Exod. xxi. 16.

The Characteriſtic and Badge of a true Chriſtian is Love, and good Works; our Saviour's whole Life on Earth was one continual Exerciſe of them: *Love one another*, ſays he, *as I have loved you.* How can we be ſaid to love our Brethren, who bring, or for ſelfiſh Ends keep them in Bondage? Do we act conſiſtent with this noble Principle, who lay ſuch heavy Burdens on our Fellow Creatures? Do we conſider, that they are called, and ſincerely deſire that they may become Heirs with us in Glory, and rejoice in the Liberty of the Sons of God, whilſt we are

with-

with-holding from them the common Liberties of Mankind? Or can the Spirit of God, by which we have always profeſſed to be led, be the Author of thoſe oppreſſive and unrighteous Meaſures? Or do we not thereby manifeſt, that temporal Intereſt hath more Influence on our Conduct herein, than the Dictates of merciful, holy and unerring [illegible]

And we likewiſe earneſtly recommend to all who have *Slaves*, to be careful to come up in the Performance of their Duty towards them, and to be particularly watchful over their own Hearts; it being, by ſorrowful Experience remarkable, that Cuſtom and a Familiarity with Evil of any Kind, hath a Tendency to byaſs the Judgment, and deprave the Mind. And it's obvious, that the future Welfare of thoſe poor *Slaves*, who are now in Bondage, is generally too much diſregarded by thoſe who keep them; if their daily Task of Labour be but fulfilled, little elſe perhaps is thought of; nay, even that which in others would be looked upon with Horror and Deteſtation, is little regarded in them by their

Maſters,

Masters, such as the frequent Separation of Husbands from Wives, and Wives from Husbands, whereby they are tempted to break their Marriage Covenants, and live in Adultery, in direct Opposition to the Laws both of God and Men, although we believe, that Christ died for all [illegible] without respect of Persons. How [illegible]n ought we to be, of engaging in [illegible] hath so natural a Tendency to lessen our Humanity, and of suffering ourselves to be enured to the Exercise of hard and cruel Measures, lest thereby we in any Degree, loose our tender and feeling Sense of the Miseries of our Fellow Creatures, and become worse than those who have not believ'd?

And, dear *Friends*, you who by Inheritance have *Slaves* born in your Families, we beseech you to consider them as Souls committed to your Trust, whom the Lord will require at your Hand, and who as well as you are made Partakers of the Spirit of Grace, and called to be Heirs of Salvation, and let it be your constant Care, to watch over them for Good, instructing them in the Fear of

God,

God, and the Knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, that they may answer the End of their Creation, and God be glorified and honoured by them, as well as by us, and so train them up, that if you should come to behold their unhappy Situation, in the same Light that many worthy Men who are at rest have done, and many of your Brethren now do; and should think it your Duty to set them free, they may be the more capable to make a proper use of their Liberty. Finally Brethren, we intreat you, in the Bowels of Gospel Love, seriously to weigh the Cause of detaining them in Bondage: If it be for your own private Gain, or any other Motive than their Good, it's much to be feared, that the Love of God, and the Influence of the holy Spririt, is not the prevailing Principle in you, and that your Hearts are not sufficiently redeemed from the World, which that you, with ourselves may more and more come to witness, through the cleansing Virtue of the holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, is our earnest Desire. With the Salutation

of our Love we are your *Friends* and *Brethren.*

Signed, by Appointment, on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, *by*

JOHN EVANS,
JOHN SMITH,
THOMAS CARLETON,
WILLIAM TRIMBLE,
JOHN SCARBROUGH,
JOSEPH HAMTON,
ABRAHAM FARRINGTON,
JOSEPH NOBLE,
JAMES DANIEL,
JOSEPH GIBSON,
JOHN SHOTWELL,
JOSEPH PARKER.

28 JY 68